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Cover Page Footnote

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Aesthetic Meaning in the Congregational Masses of James MacMillan

Stephen Kingsbury

In the last two decades, Scottish composer James MacMillan has emerged as one of the most significant musical voices of his generation. MacMillan's interest in, and inspiration from, his Scottish heritage, his devout Catholicism, and his leftist political beliefs have been well documented.¹ These extramusical concerns have led to the creation of a substantial number of sacred works that express not only the profound faith of the composer, but also the deep well of inspiration of his Scottish heritages, as well as a focus on issues of social justice.

As of this writing, MacMillan has 245 published works in his catalogue. The vast majority of these compositions are directly religious in nature, either setting a sacred text or finding their inspiration in religious ritual or narrative. In his article "God, Theology and Music," MacMillan writes in some detail about the inspiration that he finds in his religious beliefs and his concern in expressing religious elements in his compositions:

I have for a long time seen music as a striking analogy for God's relationship with us. As John McDade . . . has it, "music may be the closest human analogue to the mystery of the direct and effective communication of grace." I would go further and suggest that music is a phenomenon connected to the work of God because it invites us to touch what is deepest in our souls, and to release within us a divine force. Music opens doors to a deepening and broadening of understanding. It invites connections between organized sound and lived experience or suspected possibilities. In the connection is found the revelation, a realization of something not grasped before. Such "seeing" offers revelations about human living and divine relationships that can affect changes in our choices, our activities and our convictions. Music allows us to see, like Mary, beyond to what lurks in the crevices of the human-divine experience.²

The works that emerge from this concern are extremely varied. They are both vocal and instrumental, and range in scope from the diminutive (less than five minutes in length and scored for modest performance forces) to the massive (works exceeding an hour in length and requiring vast performance resources). The majority are concert works, intended for the performance hall. These works comprise some of MacMillan's best known and most often performed compositions, including *Seven Last Words from the Cross*; *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*; *Cantos Sagrados*; *The Strathclyde Motets*; *Credo*; and the *St. John* and *St. Luke Passions*.

It is against this backdrop that we must consider MacMillan's four settings of the Mass text. Despite their commonality of genre, each of the four is vastly different from the other three. Although all four are easily at home in the service of worship, his *Mass* (2000) and *Missa Brevis* (2008) are equally suitable for a concert setting. The remaining two, *St. Anne's Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*, are unique in that they are intended solely to be service music. It is perhaps because of this uniqueness of conception and purpose that they have remained relatively

¹ More information on this topic can be found in Stephen Andrew Kingsbury, "The Early Choral Music of James MacMillan: 1983–1993" (DMA diss., University of Illinois, 2003).

² James MacMillan, "God, Theology and Music," *New BlackFriars* 81 (2000): 25.

unknown beyond the Scottish Catholic Church. And yet, it is precisely because of this uniqueness within the composer's oeuvre that they are worthy of study.

Although both *St. Anne's Mass* and *The Galloway Mass* contain material to be sung by the church choir, they also contain a significant amount of music intended to be sung by the congregation (Table 1). Because of this, both are extremely short and utilize a simple and direct (though quite beautiful) compositional idiom. Both contain an organ accompaniment, and, while they utilize slightly different overall forms in terms of the movements they include,³ in keeping with post-Vatican II practice the text of each movement is in English, not Latin.⁴ For his text, MacMillan uses two sources: the *International Consultation on English Texts* (Kyrie, Sanctus and Benedictus, and Agnus Dei) and the *Roman Missal* (Acclamation).

Table 1

	Date	Length (Minutes)	Vocal Scoring	Instrument
<i>St. Anne's Mass</i>	1985	5'	SAATB and Congregation	Organ
<i>The Galloway Mass</i>	1996	6' 16"	Cantor or SATB Choir and Congregation	Organ

However, the straightforward, almost simplistic nature of these two works belies a depth of meaning that transcends the immediate nature of each setting. MacMillan utilizes two main techniques for imbuing meaning in each work. The first is the incorporation of musical vernaculars that stem from traditional Scottish music. The second, more complex technique stems from MacMillan's pairing of the two congregational Masses with other works. This pairing occurs on both the musical and philosophical levels; the sharing of musical elements between paired works imbues each pair with a richer sense of meaning. MacMillan accomplishes these pairings using just a few distinctive techniques.

The Congregational Masses

St. Anne's Mass was composed in 1985 for use at St. Anne's Church in Mossblown, Ayr, Scotland. MacMillan subsequently revised the work in 1996. It is scored for unison voices with optional parts for SAATB choir and organ and is composed in a straightforward declamatory style. MacMillan unifies the work by repeating material from previous movements in the final movement. However, commonalities of choral texture, key center, and phrase structure suggest a paired movement structure whereby both the inner movements and the outer movements form pairings (Table 2).

³ Both Masses set the Kyrie, Sanctus and Benedictus, Acclamation, and Agnus Dei. However, *The Galloway Mass* also includes a setting of the Gloria.

⁴ The one small exception to this is a brief *Dona Nobis* section, sung in Latin by the choir, at the end of the Agnus in *The Galloway Mass*.

Table 2: Overall Structure: *St. Anne's Mass*

	Kyrie	Sanctus and Benedictus	Acclamation	Agnus Dei
Choral Texture	All voices in unison	Unison or optional four-part harmony	Unison or optional four-part harmony	All voices in unison
Tempo	Andante, Quarter = 80	Moderato, Quarter = 92–96	Moderato, Quarter = 92–96	Slowly
Length	18 measures	36 measures	20 measures	23 measures
Meter	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4
Key Center	D minor	D major	D major	D minor
Phrase Structure	Intro, A, B, A, codetta	Intro, A, B, A', B'	Intro, A, B	Intro, A, A', B, codetta
Uses Material from			Sanctus and Benedictus	Kyrie, Sanctus and Benedictus (Acclamation)
Paired with	Agnus Dei	Acclamation	Sanctus and Benedictus	Kyrie

The Galloway Mass was composed in 1996 for the 1997 National Pilgrimage to St. Ninian's Cave near Whithorn in honor of the sixteenth centenary of the Diocese of Galloway, Scotland. It was premiered by the congregation of Good Shepherd Cathedral in Ayr on March 25, 1997, and bears a dedication to the Rt. Reverend Maurice Taylor, the bishop of Galloway. The structure of *The Galloway Mass* is similar to that of *St. Anne's Mass*, but is greater in scope than its predecessor. It is scored for congregation, either a cantor or an SATB choir (the cantor part duplicates the soprano of the choir), and organ.

As mentioned above, *The Galloway Mass* contains one more movement than *St. Anne's Mass*: a Gloria. Moreover, the approach to the incorporation of the congregation into the musical texture is slightly different. In *St. Anne's Mass*, the congregation sings material that doubles either the tutti choir (in the unison sections) or the soprano part (in the harmonized sections). *The Galloway Mass* utilizes this principle as well, most notably in the unison portions of the last three movements. However, in the first two movements (the two longest in the piece), the interaction between the congregation and the cantor or choir is much more antiphonal in nature. In the Kyrie, the congregation predominantly echoes what is sung by the choral sopranos or the cantor. Much more striking, however, is the Gloria, where the congregation sings only a single phrase, interjecting repetitions of the opening phrase at strategic points in the movement.

Like *St. Anne's Mass*, *The Galloway Mass* is unified by the use of material from earlier movements in later ones. Here, too, we see the pairings of movements. Because of its derivative

nature, the Acclamation is clearly paired with the Sanctus and Benedictus.⁵ The Kyrie and the Agnus also show elements of a paired structure; however, this time the pairing is less dependent upon commonality of mode (since all of the movements are in D minor) or texture. Rather, it is MacMillan's use of recurring themes that creates the pair. Table 3 illustrates the structure of *The Galloway Mass*.

Table 3: Overall Structure: *The Galloway Mass*

	Kyrie	Gloria	Sanctus and Benedictus	Acclamation	Agnus Dei
Choral Texture	Four-part harmony	Four-part harmony	All voices in unison	All voices in unison	All voices in unison until four-part harmony on the Dona Nobis at end
Tempo	Andante, Quarter = 80–88	Brisk, Dotted Half = ca. 56	Andante, Quarter = 112–16	Andante, Quarter = 112–16	Andante, Quarter = 92–100
Length	41 measures	140 measures	38 measures	22 measures	40 measures
Meter	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4
Key Center	D minor	D minor	D minor	D minor	D minor
Phrase Structure	Intro, A, B, A, codetta	Intro, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, codetta	Intro, A, B, C, codetta	Intro, A, B	Intro, A, A, A', codetta
Uses Material from			Kyrie and Gloria	Kyrie and Gloria (A and B are identical to A and B in the Sanctus.)	Kyrie and Gloria
Paired with	Agnus Dei		Acclamation	Sanctus (The Acclamation represents a thematic repetition of the first half of the Sanctus, with minor changes to allow for the different text.)	Kyrie

⁵ The Acclamation combines a brief introduction derived from the Kyrie with a main body of the form that duplicates the first two vocal phrases of the Sanctus.

The Use of Scottish Vernaculars

On a very general level, the common use of musical vernaculars serves to unify the two congregational Masses, giving both a shared reference to time and place. Most often MacMillan draws these vernaculars from the rich tradition of Scottish folk music. The use of Scottish vernaculars is nothing new for MacMillan; it occurs in many of his works, as a central component of his compositional identity. As he explained in an interview with Julian Johnson and Catherine Sutton, “I don’t really quote from Scottish traditional music any longer, it now comes more naturally and instinctively and has become an integral part of my musical personality.”⁶ Explaining the process further, MacMillan states:

One of the things I’ve managed to do, one of many, is to try an’ absorb what I call musical vernaculars into the music. That is, not in a kind of crossover way, or even a fusion way, but certainly to draw, absorb, on a very deep reservoir of Scottish traditional music, Celtic music, so that it infuses the character of some of the music.⁷

In utilizing these vernaculars, MacMillan not only creates his compositional identity, but also forges a strong connection to place for the works in which they occur.

The most obvious vernacular element in the congregational Masses is the use of a rhythmic figure known as the “Scottish snap.” This figure consists of a short, rhythmically emphasized pitch followed by a different pitch of longer duration (i.e., an on-the-beat sixteenth note followed by a dotted eighth note). It occurs six times in *St. Anne’s Mass* and 25 times in *The Galloway Mass*. MacMillan also incorporates a number of examples of grace-note ornamentation that are derived from the *piobaireachd* (or *pibroch*), a genre of bagpipe playing based on a theme-and-variations structure that is used to demonstrate the player’s mastery of the instrument. The form features the use of grace notes, which gradually accumulate to adorn the melody until a final, unadorned statement of the melody occurs at the end. As MacMillan describes it, “The *pibroch* is a form of bagpipe playing that has a lot of florid ornamentation punctuating the line. . . . If I look at my music objectively I can see the Celtic influence: a solid line punctuated by little flurries of ornaments.”⁸ Although such ornaments are quite common in MacMillan’s compositional output as a whole, of the two congregational Masses, they are used solely in *The Galloway Mass*, on six discrete occasions.

The Use of Auto-Quotation

A much more sophisticated technique that MacMillan utilizes to form meaning in his works is auto-quotation. Auto-quotation is the use of musical material from one work in another by the same composer. For MacMillan, this technique brings with it extramusical connotations from the earlier usage. As we will see, this has the effect of connecting what may at first appear to be disparate compositions into a cohesive set that heightens the emotional and philosophical meaning of both. Although the specific manner of implementation is different in each, this procedure is at

⁶ Julian Johnson and Catherine Sutton, *Raising Sparks: On the Music of James MacMillan: 28 September–26 October 1997, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997), 27.

⁷ James MacMillan, interview by Fiona Ritchie, *The Thistle and the Shamrock*, Classic Collaborations, Program 950.

⁸ Shirley Ratcliffe, “MacMillan,” *Choir and Organ* 7/4 (1999): 40.

work in both of MacMillan's congregational Masses. An examination of his use of auto-quotation in these works provides not only a deeper understanding of the intended philosophical and emotional impact of the works themselves, but also an interesting glimpse into the interconnectivity of MacMillan's compositional world.

Throughout his entire oeuvre, MacMillan uses two forms of auto-quotation: the parody of a single melody and the reuse of an entire musical idea or texture. Of the two, the reuse of an entire idea is the more common. However, in the congregational Masses, MacMillan's use of auto-quotation is limited to the parody of a single melody.

St. Anne's Mass

In *St. Anne's Mass*, we see an early and rather simplified use of this technique. Here, MacMillan borrows from an earlier work. In 1984, he set a poem by William Soutar⁹ entitled "The Tryst" in the style of an old Scots ballad. He later recorded this piece with the Scottish folk group the Whistlebinkies for their album *Timber Timbre*, which was released on the Greentrax label in 1999. Written in broad Scots dialect, the poem recounts a nocturnal meeting of two lovers. MacMillan has since woven this melody into the musical tapestry of several pieces, including *Tryst*, *After the Tryst*, and *Búsqueda*.

The Tryst

O luely, luely, cam she in
and luely she lay down:
I kent her by her caller lips
and her breists sae smaa and roun.

Aa throu the nicht we spak nae word
nor sindered bane frae bane:
aa throu the nicht I heard her hert
gang soundin wi ma ain.

It was about the waukrufe hour
when cocks began to craw:
that she smooled saftly throu the mirk
afore the day would daw.

O luely, luely, cam she in
and luely was she gane:
and wi her aa ma simmer days
like they had never been.¹⁰

⁹ Born in 1898, Soutar was a poet and diarist from the central Scottish city of Perth who died in 1943 at the age of 45 after being confined to bed for the last 13 years of his life as a result of a failed operation to cure spondylitis, which he had contracted during service in World War I. See "William Soutar: 1898–1943," *Gazeteer for Scotland* <<http://www.scottish-places.info/people/famousfirst1050.html>> (accessed May 23, 2014).

¹⁰ Here is a glossary to some of Soutar's words that English-speaking readers may not recognize: *luely* (softly); *kent* (knew); *caller* (fresh); *breists* (breasts); *sinder'd* (parted); *bane* (bone); *gang* (go); *waukrife* (wakeful); *smool'd* (slipped away); *mirk* (dark); *afore* (before); *wud* (would); *daw* (dawn); *gaen* (gone); *simmer* (summer). Source: www.williamsoutar.com/poems/tryst.html.

In *St. Anne's Mass*, MacMillan uses the “Tryst melody” as the melody of the two central movements. Example 1 compares it with the melody of the Sanctus and Benedictus movement of the Mass. The most notable differences are the removal of the “ornamental” notes in the Mass and the extension of the Mass melody by repetition to accommodate the text. This stripped-down version of the melody as presented in Example 1 is identical to the manner in which it is incorporated in the Acclamation.

MacMillan’s use of the “Tryst melody” in this setting is enlightening. At first glance it seems like a strange choice. Why would MacMillan utilize a melody with obvious sexual connotations in a sacred work? There are several reasons for this decision. For MacMillan, the “Tryst melody” implicitly carries connotations that go beyond the specific setting. On the most immediate level, quotation of this melody is inherently nationalistic (Scottish) inasmuch as MacMillan originally composed it in conscious imitation of a Scottish ballad to fit the “Scottishness” of Soutar’s text. Use of this melody in the Mass reflects Scottish pride, a pride that would be right at home when used as an element of worship in a Scottish church.

Example 1: Comparison of the “Tryst Melody” and the Melody from the Sanctus and Benedictus

The image displays musical notation for two pieces, comparing a specific measure from one with the beginning of another. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The first staff, labeled 'St. Anne's Mass', shows 'measure 5' starting with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note D5. The second staff, labeled '"Tryst melody"', shows 'measure 1' starting with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note D5. Below these are three more staves of music. The third staff starts at measure 7 with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note D5. The fourth staff continues the melody with quarter notes E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, and C6. The fifth staff starts at measure 14 with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note D5. The sixth staff, labeled 'measure 16', shows the melody continuing with quarter notes E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, and C6.



*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

On a more fundamental level, Soutar's text conveys connotations of "commitment, sanctity, intimacy, faith . . . , [and] love, but it is also saturated with a sadness as if all these things could expire."¹¹ Originally, MacMillan crafted a melody that he felt captured these implications of the text as it relates to the poignant description of the intimate encounter between the two lovers.¹² However, when this melody is used in a sacred work, another associative level emerges. The emotional implications of that scene here apply not to human lovers but to the relation of a believer to the divine. At the same time, the melody carries a deep sense of impending loss, deriving from the poem's almost wistful acceptance that the lovers' encounter is an all-too-brief, one-time occurrence. In *St. Anne's Mass*, MacMillan transfers this sense of loss to the sacrifice of Christ that the sacrament commemorates. In so doing, he imbues the Mass with a deepened sense of the commitment, sanctity, intimacy, faith, and love shared between a believer and the divine, as well as an acknowledgment of the sacrifice of Christ.

The Galloway Mass

While the use of auto-quotation in *St. Anne's Mass* represents an early and prototypical use of the technique, its use in *The Galloway Mass* is much more complex. The work that MacMillan pairs with *The Galloway Mass* is his clarinet concerto, *Ninian*. However, unlike the pairing of the "Tryst melody" and *St. Anne's Mass*, here the music of the Mass was composed first and later used in the concerto. *Ninian* was composed in 1996, shortly after *The Galloway Mass*. MacMillan wrote it to honor a request from the Rt. Reverend Maurice Taylor, the bishop of

¹¹ James MacMillan, liner notes for *James MacMillan: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel • Tryst*; Colin Currie, percussion; Ulster Orchestra; Takuo Yuasa, conductor; Naxos 8.554167 (1998).

¹² MacMillan, liner notes for *James MacMillan: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel • Tryst*.

Galloway, for a work to be performed during the “397 Celebration” commemorating the 1600th anniversary of Christianity in Scotland.

Ninian is a programmatic work, intended to depict three of the miracles ascribed to Ninian, the saint credited with bringing Christianity to Scotland in 397 a.d. MacMillan writes: “The three movements are based on three of the so-called Miracles of Ninian, strange and evocative tales about the saint and his followers, documented in a Latin poem written a few centuries after his death.”¹³ The first movement is entitled “The Reiver and the Bull” and relates the story of a group of reivers¹⁴ who came under cover of night to steal a herd of Ninian’s cattle.

The first movement describes how reivers came by night to steal Ninian’s herd of cattle. The bull attacked and killed their leader who was subsequently resurrected by St Ninian. The bull, in a rage, stamped and imprinted its hoof-mark in solid rock “as if it were the softest wax.” The stealth, tension and violence of this tale are represented in the music through a series of metric modulations which alternate a creeping, unsettled material with that of a more visceral and aggressive character. Ninian’s compassion is the influence behind the long slow expressive section before the end.¹⁵

The middle movement, “Pectgils,” depicts a crippled boy who was healed at Ninian’s tomb.

The second movement is based on the story of the crippled boy Pectgils who “received the tonsure and lived for many years within the walls” of the monastery at Whithorn. He lay asleep beside Ninian’s tomb and dreamt of the saint, in the shining vestments of a bishop, placing a healing hand on his head. Pectgils, who had never walked in his life, struggled up and, getting safely to his feet, “danced over the marble floor.” The music is in two parts, firstly a dreamlike sequence where the main theme from the Mass is modally altered and carried on a calm and broody clarinet line while resonated as a harmonic texture throughout the orchestra. Gradually the music becomes more unsettled and leads to the second section where the theme is transformed into a lively dance.¹⁶

The third and final movement is entitled “A Mystical Vision of the Christ-child.” It is as long as the two preceding movements put together.

The third movement draws on the description of another mystical vision. A celebrant offering communion at the Whithorn monastery was confronted, in place of the bread, by the person of Christ as a tiny child. The priest took the baby in his arms, kissed him and laid him down again on the communion paten. As he knelt to resume the Mass, the bread was restored to its place. “The holy man was deemed worthy to eat of the holy sacrament, and he belched forth sacred hymns from his throat after he had eaten.” The music begins with the solo clarinet murmuring and whispering, as if in a private world of prayer. Gradually chant-like interjections in the orchestra lead to music of a more incantatory nature. A huge, sustained chord based on C# grows to form a central pivot from which emerges the second section. The music here is marked “quasi-chorale” and “solemn and intoxicated” and is led principally by the brass. These outbursts form refrains to which the clarinet answers, three times, with an expressive and sometimes raucous cadenza. The final brass chorale leads to a coda involving a complex combination of solemn music, dance music and high frenetic scurrying textures. The final section has all the woodwind instruments playing exultant, braying, individual lines which gradually peel away leaving the solo clarinet with distant gongs and bells.¹⁷

¹³ James MacMillan, composer’s note for *Ninian* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997).

¹⁴ Reivers were raiders along the English/Scottish border who were active from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

¹⁵ MacMillan, composer’s note for *Ninian*.

¹⁶ MacMillan, composer’s note for *Ninian*.

¹⁷ MacMillan, composer’s note for *Ninian*.

On a general philosophical level, the pairing of these two works finds expression in an exploration of the connection between modern Catholics in the southwest of Scotland and the legendary founder of their faith in the region. The Diocese of Galloway encompasses the Scottish districts of North, South, and East Ayrshire, Dumfries, and Galloway. On August 31, 1997, the 1600th anniversary of the diocese was celebrated with a pilgrimage to St. Ninian's Cave, the cave near Whithorn Abbey where St. Ninian is reported to have lived. A solemn Mass was celebrated at the mouth of the cave. *The Galloway Mass* was performed as part of this service.

MacMillan himself has written extensively about the connection between these two works. In 1997, he wrote:

There was a deliberate attempt to connect the two musically, to fill *Ninian* with the music of *The Galloway Mass*, to connect past and present in the way that the Bishop and the people who asked me for the Mass connect past and present. So there's a musical connection, but there's also a timeless theological connection as well.¹⁸

He goes on to say that

there's also an attempt I think to reach into communities and make links between them. I wrote *The Galloway Mass* for the people in Ayrshire and in Galloway, and I wrote *Ninian* for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the clarinetist John Cushing. I have a curious sense of fun about linking those very different communities. As it happens John Cushing came down to hear *The Galloway Mass* being sung. Having heard the transformed version of it in *Ninian* he found it a strange, unsettling experience but a beautiful experience as well. Similarly many people from Ayrshire, when they heard about *Ninian*, came to the performance and began to hear themes that they had been singing as part of the Mass. This kind of playfulness with communities, making connections between people who would never normally have anything to do with each other, is something that appeals to me.¹⁹

The way in which the philosophical pairing plays out on a musical level provides us with an even greater depth of understanding as to the composer's intent. As is the case with the *Tryst/St. Anne's Mass* pairing, the connection between the two works is explored on two levels: the shared use of musical vernaculars derived from traditional Scottish forms and the use of auto-quotation. However, because the Mass was composed first, it is melodies from it that find a new home and help create new meaning in the concerto. Technically, MacMillan's use of the technique is also far more complex in this pairing than it is in the *Tryst/St. Anne's Mass* pair.

The most blatant use of auto-quotation occurs in the outer movements of the concerto. Here, MacMillan incorporates orchestral chorales based on material from the Mass. In the first movement, the chorale occurs at the build-up to the final climax. This chorale, presented by the orchestral winds, is based on the Agnus Dei from the Mass: it is built on three statements of the A theme (the first statement of which, as well as its derivation, is shown in Ex. 2), followed by a statement of the A' material that ends in a tag derived from measures 10–11 of the A theme (Ex. 3). This, in turn, is followed by one additional statement of the A theme and a six-measure phrase derived from the inversion of the theme (Ex. 4). The resultant structure can be described as A, A, A, A', A, inversion of A. The music critic Laurence Hughes has described this section as follows:

¹⁸ Johnson and Sutton, *Raising Sparks: On the Music of James MacMillan*, 25.

¹⁹ Johnson and Sutton, *Raising Sparks: On the Music of James MacMillan*, 25.

“One of the most moving moments in the whole piece came when clarinet and violins soared over a solemn wind chorale, resonant with tuned gongs—a musical image of the saint’s compassion amid the violence and brutality of his world.”²⁰ This seems a very apt description given the violence inherent in the scene, and also MacMillan’s own description of the section as reflecting “Ninian’s compassion.”²¹ This idea is reinforced by the reference to the Agnus Dei section of the Mass, with its emphasis on mercy and compassion.

Example 2: Comparison of the First-Movement Chorale from *Ninian* and the A Theme of the Agnus Dei from *The Galloway Mass*

Agnus Melody

measure 6

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world, have mer-cy on us

Ninian Orchestral Reduction

measure 121

ffz pp solemn, mysterious

Example 3: Comparison of the First-Movement Chorale from *Ninian* and the A' Theme of the Agnus Dei from *The Galloway Mass*

Agnus Melody

measure 22

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world, sins of the world, have

Ninian Orchestral Reduction

measure 146

p solemn, mysterious

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

²⁰ Laurence Hughes, “Classical Music: James MacMillan: Clarinet Concerto Premiere, Usher Hall, London,” *Independent* <www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/classical-music-james-macmillan-clarinet-concerto-premiere-usher-hall-london-1265901.html> (accessed May 21, 2014).

²¹ MacMillan, composer’s note for *Ninian*.

Example 4: Comparison of the First-Movement Chorale from *Ninian* and the Inversion of the A Theme of the Agnus Dei from *The Galloway Mass*

The image shows a musical score for Example 4. The top staff is labeled 'Agnus Melody' and is in 3/4 time. It starts at 'measure 6' and contains the lyrics 'Lamb of God, you take a - way the'. The bottom staff is labeled 'Ninian Orchestral Reduction' and is also in 3/4 time. It starts at 'measure 162' and includes a 'tag' section marked with a 'ff' (fortissimo) dynamic. The score includes treble and bass staves with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

A similar treatment occurs in the third movement of the concerto. MacMillan has spoken about his use in this movement of chorales that are based on what he refers to as the “recurring plainsong shape”²² from the Gloria movement of the *The Galloway Mass*. However, this only paints a partial picture. This movement contains four distinct orchestral chorales. Of these four, the second and third (Exx. 5 and 6) are, as MacMillan states, derived from the Gloria—the second chorale is based on the introduction and the third chorale on the C’ theme (m. 35). MacMillan also bases the tuned gong melody that occurs in the aleatoric section at the end of the movement on the A theme from the Gloria (Ex. 7). However, he incorporates material from the Kyrie and Agnus movements of the Mass in this movement of the concerto as well. The opening orchestral material of the movement is derived from the Kyrie’s A theme (Ex. 8), and the first chorale (Ex. 9) is based on the Kyrie introduction. The final chorale of the movement is based on the introduction from the Agnus (Ex. 10). In each case, the pitch level of the melodic source is altered, as is the rhythmic structure in Example 8. However, in all three cases the derivation from the source material remains clearly audible.

²² Johnson and Sutton, *Raising Sparks: On the Music of James MacMillan*, 25.

Example 5: Comparison of the Second Third-Movement Chorale from *Ninian* and the Gloria Melody from *The Galloway Mass*

The musical score for Example 5 is divided into two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the Gloria (measure 1) and the start of the Ninian Orchestral Reduction (measure 116, labeled 'Quasi-chorale'). The Gloria is in 3/4 time, while the Ninian reduction is in common time (C). The Ninian reduction features a 'ff' dynamic and the instruction 'solemn and intoxicated'. The second system continues the comparison, with the Gloria starting at measure 6 and the Ninian reduction at measure 6. The Ninian reduction includes dynamics 'p' and 'f', a 'rall.' marking, and the instruction 'laissez vibrer'. A 'ff' dynamic is also present at the bottom of the system.

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

Example 6: Comparison of the Third Third-Movement Chorale from *Ninian* and the Gloria from *The Galloway Mass*

The musical score for Example 6 is divided into two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the Gloria (measure 35) and the start of the Ninian Orchestral Reduction (measure 134, labeled 'Quasi-chorale'). The Gloria is in 3/4 time, while the Ninian reduction is in common time (C). The Ninian reduction features a 'ff' dynamic and the instruction 'solemn and intoxicated'. The second system continues the comparison, with the Gloria starting at measure 35 and the Ninian reduction at measure 134. The Ninian reduction includes a 'ff' dynamic and the instruction 'laissez vibrer'.

6

6

11 measure 41

11

with awe

laissez vibrer

ff

pp

p *f* *rall.*

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

Example 7: Comparison of the Closing Material from the Third Movement of *Ninian* and the Gloria Melody from *The Galloway Mass*

measure 11

Gloria

(Solo Clarinet) play until all the other woodwind players have stopped,

Tubular bells *mp*

Ninian Tuned gongs *mp*

Bell plates

repeat between 4 and 8 times

g^{vb}

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

Example 8: Comparison of the Opening Orchestral Material from the Third Movement of *Ninian* and the Kyrie Melody from *The Galloway Mass*

The image shows a musical score for Example 8. It consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Kyrie Melody' and is in 3/4 time. It shows measure 9 with a single note on a treble clef staff. The bottom staff is labeled 'Ninian Orchestral Reduction' and is in common time (C). It shows measure 9 with a piano introduction marked 'pp' and 'lontano'. The melody is a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand, followed by a half note. The measure number 'measure 9' is written above both staves.

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

Example 9: Comparison of the First Third-Movement Chorale from *Ninian* and the Kyrie Melody from *The Galloway Mass*

The image shows a musical score for Example 9. It consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Kyrie' and is in 3/4 time. It shows measure 1 with a single note on a treble clef staff. The bottom staff is labeled 'Ninian Orchestral Reduction' and is in 3/4 time. It shows measure 86, labeled 'Quasi-chorale'. The melody is a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand, followed by a half note. The measure number 'measure 1' is written above the top staff, and 'measure 86' is written above the bottom staff.

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

Example 10: Comparison of the Fourth Third-Movement Chorale from *Ninian* and the Agnus Dei Melody from *The Galloway Mass*

The musical score is divided into three systems, each featuring two staves: the top staff for the Agnus Dei Melody and the bottom staff for the Ninian Orchestral Reduction.

System 1:

- Agnus Dei:** Labeled "Introduction (measure 1)". The melody begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.
- Ninian Orchestral Reduction:** Labeled "Quasi-chorale" and "solemn and intoxicated". It begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music includes triplets and a section marked *ff* *sempre* (3).

System 2:

- Agnus Dei:** Labeled "A Theme (measure 6)". The melody continues with a piano (*p*) dynamic.
- Ninian Orchestral Reduction:** Continues with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with many triplets and accents.

System 3:

- Agnus Dei:** Labeled "A' Theme (measure 22)". The melody changes key signature to two sharps (F# and C#) and begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.
- Ninian Orchestral Reduction:** Continues with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with many triplets and accents.

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

In contrast, the second movement utilizes its source material in a more obfuscated manner. The movement is based on the Kyrie melody, but, reflecting the movement's depiction of a dream, the melody is obscured. As Example 11 illustrates, this obfuscation is accomplished through octave displacements and by changing the initial D used in the Kyrie melody to D-sharp. MacMillan further alters the melody by changing the rhythm and adding some pitches (such as G-sharp in measure 7). Moreover, the melody is extended in several places through the insertion of additional material. We also see a variant (beginning in measure 11), where the opening is transposed up a fifth. As the movement progresses, the first four notes of the Kyrie melody (with altered first pitch—D-sharp instead of D) become a germinal seed for the movement. Examples 12–14 illustrate the working out of this motive as it appears in several places over the course of the movement.

Example 11: Comparison of the Opening Material from the Second Movement of *Ninian* and the Kyrie Melody of *The Galloway Mass*

The image displays three systems of musical notation comparing the opening material of the second movement of *Ninian* with the Kyrie melody of *The Galloway Mass*.

System 1: Shows the Kyrie melody (top staff) and the Ninian Orchestral Reduction (bottom two staves). The Kyrie melody is divided into Measures 9-12, an Extension, and Measures 17-20. The Ninian Orchestral Reduction includes dynamics *pp* and *poco*.

System 2: A variant of measures 9-12, transposed up a fifth. It includes a piano part with the instruction *(sempre l.v.)*.

System 3: A detailed comparison of Measure 9 and Measure 10, each followed by an Extension. The Kyrie melody is shown in the top staff, and the Ninian Orchestral Reduction is in the bottom two staves. Dynamics include *poco cresc.*, *mp*, and *p*.

*The measure numbers above indicate their placement in that source.

Example 12: *Ninian*, Movement 2, Measures 76–79

Ninian Orchestral Reduction

Example 13: *Ninian*, Movement 2, Measure 107

Clarinet

Ninian Orchestral Reduction

Example 14: *Ninian*, Movement 2, Measures 181–83

Gioioso e abbandonatamente (*eruptive, furious, wild*)
(*tubular bells, tuned gongs, timpani; sempre laissez vibrer*)

Ninian Orchestral Reduction

What, then, does this say about the musical structure of the concerto as a whole? Overall, MacMillan's use of auto-quotation serves to deepen the meaning of each of the three scenes that the concerto depicts. The use of material derived from the Agnus movement of the Mass in the first movement of the concerto portrays a plea for peace and mercy appropriate to Ninian's compassion amid the violence of the reiver's death and the violence of the bull. In the second movement, the use of the Kyrie melody adds an air of supplication for mercy on behalf of the crippled boy. In the third movement, MacMillan first expands this referentiality in order to create a large-scale

structure of the movement that loosely follows the progression of the Mass, while appending a “coda” from the Gloria (the order of quotations goes Kyrie, Kyrie, Gloria, Gloria, Agnus, Gloria). In terms of the meaning that this imparts, we see clearly the progression of the story that the movement is attempting to relate: through the Kyrie quotations we see the devotion of the suppliant; the “Gloria” portrays his joy at the vision of the Christ-child; and through the “Agnus” we see his belief in salvation. The movement ends, rightly, with an echo of the joy of the Gloria as the vision fades.

Conclusion

In a recent interview published in *Church Music Quarterly*, MacMillan states that he believes his congregational Masses were not successful. He blames this lack of success on the liturgical culture in Scotland. “I was keen to add my music to the congregational body of work, in the hope that people would want to sing it. I have come to the decision that it was a failure and have decided not to write any more. The culture of liturgy in the Catholic Church in Scotland got too much for me.” He goes on to discuss the work being done by composers such as Adam Bartlett and Fr. Guy Nichols, whose liturgical music he finds exciting: “These people are trying to respond to the instructions of the post-Vatican II liturgical reforms. Sometimes the simplest options work, which goes against the orthodoxy that this form of music is elitist.”²³

This statement suggests that MacMillan blames the lack of widespread popularity of his liturgical works on the perception by Scottish congregations that these pieces are elitist. This claim of elitism is ironic, given that MacMillan’s congregational Masses are composed in such an accessible style. Moreover, judging a piece of art solely by its popularity diminishes not only the import of the intended aesthetic, but also a work’s potential significance to future generations. The extra-referentiality of MacMillan’s congregational Masses is meant to provide an important avenue of emotional and spiritual resonance. MacMillan’s use of auto-quotation provides an important insight into the intended meaning of his works, and thus their potential for emotional resonance.

The use of material from one work in another brings with it important extramusical connotations and serves to unify the pair into a cohesive artistic whole. In the case of *St. Anne’s Mass*, it is material from the “Tryst melody” that provides the Mass with much of both its Scottish character and its connotation of the intimacy shared between the believer and the divine. In the case of *The Galloway Mass*, it is the use of material from the Mass in MacMillan’s clarinet concerto *Ninian* that connects the concerto to southwest Scotland. It also helps depict the stories of the saint’s three miracles. In both pairings, the use of previously composed material also brings a level of musical structure to the later work of the pairing. While a complete understanding of this “hidden” knowledge is not necessary for the average congregation or choir member in order to enjoy and to find a degree of reverence and spiritual reflection in the use of these works, awareness of their deeper meaning brings with it a more fruitful and complete understanding of the intended aesthetic, philosophical, and emotional impact of each work. It also provides a fascinating insight into the interconnectivity of MacMillan’s compositional output.

²³ “Truth and Beauty: An Interview with Composer James MacMillan,” *Church Music Quarterly*, June 2015: 30.

Acknowledgments

St. Anne's Mass by James MacMillan

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